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# Wisconsin Karner Blue Butterfly Habitat Conservation Plan and Environmental Impact Statement

## **Chapter 2: Statewide Karner Blue Butterfly Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP)**

### **E. Impacts of HCP Implementation**

The biological, environmental, and socio-economic impacts associated with implementing this HCP were assessed. Direct and indirect (i.e. secondary) and short- and long-term (i.e. cumulative) effects were analyzed. Chapters III through V of this document contain a discussion of the effected environment, alternatives to the HCP which were considered, and an assessment of likely environmental consequences. These chapters along with Chapters I and II (the HCP) and VI-IX constitute the environmental impact statement (EIS) prepared to meet the requirements of both state and federal laws (WEPA and NEPA). The conclusions drawn from the impact analyses are summarized in this chapter. Chapter V provides additional information on the conclusions of the analyses.

#### **1. Biological Impacts**

The Karner blue butterfly requires active management, thus a "do nothing" approach would result in a net loss of habitat. HCP partner goals, as identified in the Articles of Partnership (Appendix C) and the HCP (Chapter II), are maintenance of habitat and Karner blue butterfly abundance. The HCP represents a proactive approach to Karner blue butterfly conservation and is expected to have a significant positive impact on the species.

Throughout the high-potential range, monitoring will determine whether or not changes in habitat and Karner blue butterfly numbers are occurring. Commitments to adaptive management and research have been and are being made to address any significant declines, if they should occur. The adaptive management strategy allows land use activities to continue, while assuring protection of the Karner blue butterfly.

On a statewide basis, biological communities will not be significantly impacted by HCP implementation. There may be a reduction in the total number of acres of mature forests and a corresponding increase in the number of acres of prairies, barrens, savannas and young forests. The loss of forest acreage will be insignificant given the extensive forest coverage in the state. The increase in the less abundant prairie, barrens and savanna communities can be construed as beneficial to biological diversity given the historic acreage losses of these community types.

Federal and state-listed endangered and threatened species will not be significantly affected by the proposed management activities. In general, the federally-listed species found in Wisconsin are not common within the affected environment. State-listed species that occur in sites planned for Karner blue butterfly management will likely benefit or not be affected at all from the management.

## **2. Environmental Effects**

Implementation of the HCP and the activities outlined in it will not significantly impact geological or soil resources, hydrology or drainage, climate or weather, or air or water quality conditions in the affected environment. While individual activities included in the HCP may have local effects, the cumulative impacts of these effects on a statewide basis will not be significant. Many of these local impacts can be eliminated, minimized, or mitigated through the application of best management practices. In addition, any impacts to the above mentioned resources associated with the HCP would exist whether or not an ITP was issued.

## **3. Socio-economic Impacts**

Human population and demographic trends will not likely be affected by the issuance of an ITP or implementation of the HCP. Population growth and demographic patterns are anticipated to follow recent trends whether or not an ITP is issued. Similarly, employment and recreational trends will not likely be impacted by HCP implementation.

The Wisconsin Karner Blue Butterfly HCP will not likely affect household income. However, issuance of an ITP and implementation of the HCP will likely have economic benefits for HCP partners. Issuance of the ITP would help partners maintain the value of property included in the HCP. In addition, local communities will likely benefit from the secondary affects of the partners' economic land use activities. This is particularly true in counties where forest products and utility industries are a major segment of the economy. Without an ITP, partners would have to modify or discontinue planned management activities on some lands or risk fines for illegal take. An ITP would allow transportation projects to move forward without costly delays or realignments due to the presence of Karner blue butterflies.

Management of state and county forest properties will continue to be subject to public involvement. In many cases, these properties will provide renewed opportunities for citizens to experience barrens, prairie and savanna habitats and their respective faunas, including the Karner blue butterfly.

Implementation of the HCP is not expected to have significant adverse effects on archaeological or historical resources. All federal, state, and local historic preservation laws and programs will remain applicable to lands included in the HCP.